CITY OF
GOLETA

TO: Chair and Members of the Library Advisory Commission

SUBMITTED BY: JoAnne Plummer, Neighborhood Services Director

PREPARED BY: Elizabeth Saucedo, City Librarian

SUBJECT: Hoopla Digital Content Borrowing Limits

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive information regarding the current Hoopla Digital borrowing model for the Goleta and Santa Ynez Valley Libraries and discuss a proposal to place a moderate borrowing limit to manage increasing costs.

BACKGROUND:

The Goleta and Santa Ynez Valley Libraries system (Goleta) provides patrons with access to an online library of eBooks, eAudiobooks and music through Hoopla Digital (Hoopla), an electronic content platform that is used in many public libraries across the United States. This subscription is funded by individual libraries within the Black Gold Cooperative Library System, which allows each library to establish its own lending model within their respective budgetary capacities.

DISCUSSION:

Currently, Goleta is the only Black Gold member library that does not utilize borrowing limits related to a budget cap. Each patron may borrow up to five online checkouts per month from Hoopla; however, as more patrons have used this platform, costs have continued to increase unbounded. Consequently, costs have increased each year and have, on occasion, exceeded the amount budgeted for Black Gold expenses.

In the past twelve months, 941 Goleta patrons have registered for Hoopla. Staff anticipate that the popularity of digital content will only continue to increase, and with it the expenses associated with this online platform. Digital collections are a valuable resource that allows modern libraries to extend access beyond the walls of the physical building. As such, it is not recommended that service be discontinued altogether if possible.

To ensure fiscal responsibility while maintaining this service, it is recommended that a limit, in some form, be included in Goleta's lending model. Staff consulted with Goleta's

account representative at Hoopla, who provided analytics on the digital collection, usage trends, and price tiers. The following table outlines the available limit options:

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
1) Monthly Fiscal Limit + Limits Per Patron	Ensures budget is never exceeded	Borrowing ability ceases for all patrons once limit is reached, sometimes very early in the month
2) Reduction to Monthly Borrowing Limits Per Patron	Slows increase of expenses; potentially allows usage among greater number of patrons at lower individual usage	Short-term solution until more patrons utilize service; reduces access levels to individual patrons
3) Adjustment to Titles Available by Price Tier	Moderates usage of higher-cost titles, which are not necessarily higher-demand titles; allows for flexibility based on live data, patron interests, and availability through other platforms	Limits portions of the collection available for circulation

In assessing these options, Staff performed a thorough review of the usage patterns of Goleta's online Hoopla collection. The data reflects that although the largest portion of the collection is eBooks, the highest usage is of Audiobooks. Further, the highest Audiobook usage occurs at the fourth highest price point of $2.00 – $2.99 per title.

In consultation with the library's Hoopla account representative, the most patron-friendly limit to apply to Goleta's account is to adjust the number of Audiobook titles available within this specific price tier. This is in alignment with Option 3 in the table above and will allow for the highest service level to continue while ensuring that costs do not continue to increase without safeguards in place. It is also a customizable setting that can be adjusted based on specific titles, trends, and availability from alternate platforms, allowing Staff the flexibility to manage this digital collection in real time while ensuring greater financial stability. Additional funds have also been budgeted toward the online OverDrive platform during the two years that Goleta Valley Library is under construction to maintain access levels while operating from a smaller space. This will also help offset the moderate adjustments made to the Hoopla collection.

This limit can be readily placed into effect by Hoopla upon Staff request. If placed, the intent would be to monitor cost and usage levels regularly and make any further adjustments as needed in a responsive manner.

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